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should be our great and only object. Philosophy stimulates to the pursuit of it as the most precious of all gems. Nothing should abate our zeal ; nothing should discourage our efforts in the search. Fifty years ago chemistry was hardly known as a science. Now, what triumphs has it accomplished, and what a world of wonders has it opened to our view ! In its application to agriculture it presents itself as the natural solvent of its now difficult mysteries ; its whole tendency and aim, in this matter, unlike many other of its applications, is to confer unmixed good upon mankind. It discloses to our adoration more and more of those mighty operations of a beneficent Providence, by which, in an unbroken circle of dependence and subserviency, the most offensive substances are converted into all that is nutritive, delicious, and beautiful. It shows us how, by the exact and wonderful combination of a thousand subtile influences in the earth, the air, the rain, the light, the dew, daily and hourly the table of the Divine bounty is spread for all that live ; and not one of his great family is, by the master of the feast, ever sent empty away.

ART. VII. — *Tragedie ed altre Poesie* di ALESSANDRO MANZONI. Settima Edizione. Parigi. 1830. 12mo. pp. 487.

IN our Number for last October,* we gave some account of Manzoni's celebrated novel, "I Promessi Sposi." We took no notice of the poetical performances of this most distinguished living poet of Italy, except that in a note at the close we made a slight allusion to what he had done in this his favorite department, and ventured to call his "Ode upon Napoleon," the finest that has ever been written upon that most attractive but difficult subject. We propose at present to add a little to that allusion, and to say a very few words upon those tragedies and shorter metrical pieces, upon which his fame as a bard has been established.

The genius of Manzoni, melancholy, contemplative, tender, is specially suited to the ode, and to those subjective compositions, in which the sentiments and feelings of the

* See *North American Review*, Vol. LI. pp. 337 et seq.

writer himself are to be fervidly expressed. It seems to us to be essentially lyrical. Though the tragedies make the principal figure in the present volume, they rather confirm than contradict this judgment ; their lyric choruses showing a marked superiority over their dialogue. Indeed, delicate as they are in their tone, beautiful as many passages and even scenes are, they are rather poems than plays. They want the compass, the variety, the fire, the deep insight into human passions, that belong to a master in this most arduous field of invention. The highest and sternest tragic elements are altogether wanting. The great goddess Force is not present. They are graceful, but not strong ; statue-like, and yet not absolutely Greek. Their structure is so simple as to give scope for no ingenuity, and to admit of no unexpected turn of incident or feeling ; and their spirit is so quiet, even when bloody things are doing, that they never stir us to the true dramatic point.

The first of these in the volume, which is the first also in the date of its composition, is “ *Il Conte di Carmagnola*.” It has found discontented critics in its own country, nor has it succeeded elsewhere in exciting any general applause. There is appended to it, in the volume before us, a critical commendatory notice, translated into French from Goethe’s “ *Kunst und Alterthum*.” It is doubtless there for honor’s sake. But we never desire to see a colder or more hesitating way of pronouncing a eulogy. It admits that the work may not meet entirely the German taste ; but says, that “ considering the design of its author, we have found it interesting, and conformable to what art and nature require ; and we have at last convinced ourselves, by the most scrupulous examination, that he has accomplished, like a master, the task that he had proposed to himself.” Such a method of discovering the merits of a tragedy will seem singular enough to those, who are looking for something that can open the fountains of terror and tears. The Count di Carmagnola, a *condottiero* of the fifteenth century, is a sort of feudal Coriolanus. Belonging to Milan, he leads the Venetian forces victoriously against the Milanese ; and there perishes, a victim to the jealousy of the government in whose cause he had triumphed. This is literally the whole story, which contains no diversities, and can be scarcely said to have any plot. There is a chorus, however, at the close of the second act, when the two armies are

about to join battle, which is indeed of a rare excellence. It wails over the miseries of war ; describes the malicious joy of the stranger, as he looks down from the Alps upon the civil strifes of poor Italy ; and exhorts to universal peace and brotherhood.

The second tragedy, “*Adelchi*,” published two or three years afterwards, carries us back to the age of Charlemagne and the final overthrow of the Lombard power in Italy. There is certainly more interest in this than in the former work, — more of the movement and spirit of life. But there are the same defects here also. It is monotonous, feeble, indiscriminating ; wielding no dramatic energy ; reaching to no bold height. It presents us rather a succession of scenes than an artistic whole. Its characters want character. They are marked with none of those peculiarities of the race, the age, the individual heart, which the hand of the true dramatist is so quick to seize and so proud to portray. Here are scholarly Latins from the Papal Court, and rough Pagan conquerors of the Roman soil, and the haughty Frank from the other side of the mountains. But they all talk alike, and one is hardly to be known from the other in any better way than by his theatrical costume. The old Lombard King utters nothing but what is perfectly becoming. *Adelchi*, his colleague and son, is a knight of the days of chivalry, as full of tenderness as of valor, and sentimental as one of the wild heroes of Ossian. The Great Charles has no particular trait in him of any kind. After a series of incidents, costing no skill either to select, invent, or arrange, the heroic young prince dies upon the stage, of wounds received in a last desperate effort ; and the childless *Desiderius* remains a captive in the hands of the Frank King.

Such is the account that we feel bound to give, in all critical honesty, of these tragedies. They enjoy neither the sober advantage of the unities, nor the higher advantage that may be gained by a noble departure from them. They neither possess the severe beauty of the classical, nor catch the wild graces of the romantic school. But our hearts already begin to reproach us for having said so much in dispraise. We are half inclined to take back a part of what has been written, as if it were unjust to so admirable a poet. But we do not mean to be unjust. Our object has been not so much to find fault, as to justify our own position at the

outset, that the talent of Manzoni is peculiarly and eminently lyrical ; not suited to the stormy passions and “ sceptred pall ” of “ gorgeous tragedy,” and the boards of a theatre ; but delighting to pour out its generous and solemn heart in snatches of earnest melody. We would say to his muse ;

“ Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes.”

And she is coming again, in a form from which the best things may be expected. A late number of the “*Foreign Quarterly Review*” announces a new poem called “*Italia*.” This is the very subject for a pen and heart like Manzoni’s. We shall look for it with unusual interest.

The “*Sacred Hymns*” are five very short pieces on the Nativity, the Passion, the Resurrection, Pentecost, and the name of Mary ; conceived in the full spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, to which the poet is attached with a profound enthusiasm. “*Goethe* praised them not a little,” says our preface, “although he was of another Communion ; while a good Catholic has been found to complain of them as being obscure.” As we are not aware that poetry belongs to any sect, we cannot think this a circumstance any way surprising, or very well worth the mentioning. We cannot help thinking, however, that the charge of obscurity is not wholly groundless ; and we must confess for our own part, that we have not been able to make much out of these hymns. No one, we think, can take them up without disappointment, who has first read “*The Fifth of May*” ; — as the fine ode on Napoleon is named, from the day of the Emperor’s death.

Though we are fully conscious that all poetry, especially in its highest kinds, is essentially untranslatable, yet we have not been able to keep ourselves from attempting to present in an English dress what has been admired so much on the Continent of Europe. The following version will be found at least scrupulously exact.

THE FIFTH OF MAY.

“ He was ; — and as his latest sigh
Devoid of motion left
The poor remains, unconscious now,
Of such a breath bereft ; —

“ So, struck at once aghast and still,
Stands at the tidings Earth ;
Mutely reflecting on that hour,
The last one of the Man of Fate ; —
Nor knows she when another tread
Of mortal foot, that proud one’s mate,
To trample on her bloody dust
Will spring to birth.

“ My Genius saw his sparkling throne,
Saw, and had nought to say ; —
And when in Fortune’s rapid change
He fell, — arose, — and lay ;
With thousand voices shouting round
It mingled not one cry.
But now, from servile flattery pure,
From coward insult free,
It rises, — mov’d that splendor such
Should fade so suddenly, —
And scatters o’er the urn a chant,
That may not die.

“ From the Alps to the Pyramids,
From the Rhine to the Manzanare,*
Of that sure one the thunder-bolt
Sped with the lightning’s glare ; —
He shot from Scylla to the Don,
From one to the other sea.
Was it true fame ? — For other times
That high decree. We low
The forehead bend before that Power
Supreme, which chose to show
What vaster print of its great will
In him could be.

“ The stormy and the trembling joy
Of a grand enterprise, —
The burning care of a tameless heart
With kingdoms in its eyes, —
Were his ; — and then the palm he won
’T were mad to have hop’d from fate.
All he pass’d through ; — the height of fame
Heightened by perils o’er ; —

* We take the same liberty with the name of this Spanish stream, that we find in the original, — cutting off the final z.

The headlong flight, — the victory, —
The palace, — exile's shore.
Twice was he cast into the dust,
Twice consecrate.

“ He nam'd himself ; and ages twain,
Arm'd with a mutual hate,
Submissively repair'd to him,
As if to know their fate.
He silenc'd them, and umpire sat,
Between them, but above.
He vanish'd ; and his vacant months
Clos'd on that shore's small bound ; —
Object of envy measureless, —
Of pity, too, profound, —
Of enmity unquenchable,
And quenchless love.

“ As on the head of a wreck'd man
The billow whirls and weighs ; —
That billow, o'er whose top the wretch
Stretches his eager gaze, —
Straining his sight, but all in vain,
To spy the distant land ; —
So o'er that mind the foaming weight
Of recollections roll'd.
Oft strove he to the times afar,
His very self to unfold ;
And on the everlasting page
Fell the tired hand.

“ How often, as the idle day
Was dying into rest,
His flashing looks upon the ground,
His arms across his breast,
He stood ; — and of the days that were
Came up the memories thick !
He thought upon the shifting tents, —
The rampart's battered force, —
The lightning of the infantry, —
The surges of the horse, —
And of the hurried battle-word,
Obeyed as quick.

“ Alas ! in such a strife, perhaps,
The panting spirit fled,
And disappeared ; but then a hand
Strong from the Heaven was spread,

“ And to more respirable air,
 Pitying, that soul conveyed ;
 And bore it o'er hope's flowery paths
 To everlasting fields ;
 Where waits that prize, whose ready gift
 More than our wishes yields,
 And where the fame that pass'd is all
 Silence and shade.

“ Lovely, immortal, bountiful, —
 Faith, — used to triumph ever !
 Write this new victory, and rejoice ;
 For haughtier height has never
 To the reproach of Golgotha
 Bow'd down its humbled crest.
 Thou from his weary ashes keep
 Each word that 's harshly spoken !
 The God, who prostrates and lifts up,
 Who breaks and heals the broken, —
 On that lone pillow, at his side,*
 Vouchsafed to rest.”

ART. VIII. — *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai, and Arabia Petræa. A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838, by E. Robinson and E. Smith. Undertaken in reference to Biblical Geography. Drawn up from the Original Diaries, with Historical Illustrations.* By EDWARD ROBINSON, D. D., Professor of Biblical Literature in the Union Theological Seminary, New York ; Author of “ A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament,” &c. With New Maps and Plans in Five Sheets. Boston : Crocker & Brewster. Vols. I., II., III. pp. 571, 679, 721. 8vo.

THERE has been no lack of travellers to the Holy Land. Tourists from nearly all the civilized countries of the West have flocked thither, in every succeeding century since the birth of Christ. First, we have an uncounted number of credulous story-tellers, prepared to put faith in every thing, and to retail signs and wonders to multitudes as wise as them-

* This alludes to the crucifix, that lay on the pillow of the dying Emperor.